

THE FOURTH YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT AND HIS LIFE WORK

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWENTY YEARS
AGO, AND TODAY

By JOHN B. MANNING, M. D.

TWENTY years ago I addressed a questionnaire as secretary of my class to the fourth-year students of one of our foremost medical schools. Among other things asked in the questionnaire was what most interested these fourth-year medical stu-

dents in the practice of medicine. I thought it might be of interest to physicians in general, and of especial interest to those more intimately associated with the arrangement of the studies of the fourth-year student to peruse the following table. It may contain nothing new, but I don't recall ever having seen a similar publication. These men were all college graduates with an average age of 26 years when the questionnaire was sent out. Mature men apparently as capable of deciding what their future work would be as any similar group. Some may be

Fourth Year Medical No.	Reply to Questionnaire by Fourth-Year Student (Reply twenty years ago)	Branch of Medicine Ultimately Undertaken as Life Work	Remarks
I	General medicine		Deceased
II	General surgery	Surgery	Practice limited to surgery S*
III	Pediatrics	Pediatrics	Pediatrics
IV	General medicine and surgery		Life insurance examiner
V	Surgery	Surgery	Practice limited to surgery S*
VI	Surgery	Surgery	Practice limited to surgery S*
VII	Surgery	Medicine	Practice limited to internal medicine I*
VIII	Clinical medicine	Pediatrics	Practice limited to pediatrics Pd*
IX	Pediatrics and dermatology		General medicine
X	Omitted this feature in questionnaire	Pediatrics	This man was an intern on graduation in a children's hospital following two years of general hospital work, and so evidently his interests lay in this field as a student. Practice limited to pediatrics Pd*
XI	General medicine	Probably in public health	Captain U. S. A. Medical Corp. Was stationed in the Canal Zone
XII	Obstetrics and pediatrics	Public health, Child Welfare Division	Head of Child Welfare Division of an extremely well-organized State Commission of Health
XIII	Clinical medicine	Internal medicine	Practice limited to internal medicine I*
XIV	General medicine	Surgery	Limited to surgery S*
XV	Orthopedic surgery	Assistant to nationally known orthopedic surgeon for three years	Now life insurance exclusively
XVI	Omitted to state this feature of questionnaire	Surgery	Practice limited to surgery S*
XVII	General medicine		Lieutenant-Commander in U. S. N. doing general medicine, personal communication
XVIII	Surgery	Ophthalmology Otology Laryngology Rhinitology	O. A. L. R.
XIX	Surgery	Genitourinary surgery	Limited to urology, surgery U*
XX	General medicine	General medicine	
XXI	Mechanical therapeutics	Orthopedic surgery	Limited to orthopedic surgery until recent severe illness obliged him to discontinue all work Or*

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XXII	Surgery	General medicine	Now specializing in life insurance
XXIII	Clinical medicine	Internal medicine	I*
XXIV	Surgery and pediatrics	General practice	Especially interested in physiotherapy
XXV	General medicine and nervous and mental diseases	Retired	
XXVI	Surgery and obstetrics		Major in U. S. A. Specializing in eye, ear, nose, and throat department of large Army hospital
XXVII	Surgery and obstetrics	Diseases of women, obstetrics, and some children's work	
XXVIII	Omitted to fill in this part of questionnaire	Ophthalmology	Limited to ophthalmology
XXIX	Laryngology and rhinology	Limited to life insurance work	
XXX	Surgery	Surgery	
XXXI	Medicine	Clinical pathology	C. P.*
XXXII	Medicine	Otology Laryngology Rhinology	Now limiting work to life insurance work
XXXIII	Surgery	General practice and surgery	
XXXIV	Medicine	Internal medicine	I*
XXXV	Surgery	Surgery	S*
XXXVI	Clinical medicine	Pediatrics	Pd*
XXXVII		Was in Army	Schrapnel wound during war. Was in regular U. S. A. service. Retired because of wounds received in action.
XXXVIII	Internal medicine and pediatrics	Pediatrics	Pd*
XXXIX	Surgery	Surgery, obstetrics	
XL	Surgery	Surgery	S*
XLI	Surgery	Surgery	S*
XLII	Surgery	Surgery	S*
XLIII	Pediatrics		Not listed in American Medical Association Directory
XLIV	Orthopedic surgery	Orthopedic surgery	Or*
XLV		Tuberculosis	
XLVI	Surgery	Surgery	S*
XLVII	Surgery		Major U. S. A. Medical School, Washington, D. C. Interested in surgery.
XLVIII	General medicine	General medicine	
XLIX	Surgery	Surgery	S*
L	Internal medicine and pediatrics	General medicine	
LI	Surgery	Surgery	S*
LII	Surgery and pediatrics	Surgery	S*
LIII	Pediatrics	Internal medicine	I*

Fourth Year Medical No.	Reply to Questionnaire by Fourth-Year Student (Reply twenty years ago)	Branch of Medicine Ultimately Undertaken as Life Work	Remarks
LIV	Neurology	Neurology and psychiatry	NP*
LV	General medicine	Neurology and psychiatry	
LVI	General medicine		Director of Public Health Laboratory Service of International Health Board
LVII	Laryngology		Deceased, 1912
LVIII	Surgery	Surgery	S*
LVIX	General medicine	General medicine	
LX	Neurology	Neurology and psychiatry	NP*
LXI	General medicine, obstetrics, and pediatrics	Pediatrics	Pd*
LXII	General medicine		Deceased
LXIII			General work
LXIV	Clinical medicine		Doing general medicine, but interested in pediatrics
LXV	Dermatology and pediatrics		Deceased
LXVI	General medicine and pediatrics		OR*
LXVII	General medicine		General medicine
LXVIII	Pediatrics	Pediatrics	Pd*

considered as distinguished and to have achieved success in their chosen work far beyond the confines of their communities. The information was obtained through the latest directory of the American Medical Association, personal communications, and through the office of the University Alumni Association. There are factors as death and illness that have interrupted the career of some. Four have died, one has retired and one, who had a brilliant career, has become permanently ill.

Even a casual survey of the table indicates that the majority of the men have taken up as their life work the thing that interested them most as fourth-year medical students.

The star means that in the American Medical Association Directory these men are listed as limiting themselves in their field of practice. A few in personal communication have stated that their work is actually limited although I have not starred it, nor is it starred on the American Medical Association Directory. The reason for this is that they probably have never taken the trouble to fill out the directory cards fully.

CONCLUSIONS

It would seem that the only conclusion of any value which might be drawn from this paper is that, so far as these fourth-year students are concerned, the policy of allowing considerable freedom in the choice of studies during the fourth year appears to have been wise.

Another interesting feature is that the graduates

of this school at this time, as indicated by this table, nearly all went into clinical medicine as their ultimate work as distinguished from research work. It has always been the policy, I believe, of this school, which is one of the best in the country, to develop doctors who come into personal contact with the individual patient rather than research men. I hope this policy will be continued.

C. L. Hartsook, Cleveland, cautions against the indiscriminate use of iodine as a preventive of goiter, especially the use of iodized salt, which is now being very much more extensively used by the public than other forms of iodine, such as sodium iodide, iodostarine and compound solution of iodine (Lugol's solution), probably because of the propaganda to insure its use and also because of the fact that when one member of a family is advised to use iodized salt the whole family must use it, as its use in cooking is always advised. This extensive use of iodized salt, in Hartsook's opinion, appears to be a plausible explanation of the fact that between 25 and 50 per cent of all the cases of hyperthyroidism in which operation has been done here during the last six months appeared to have been directly due to or exacerbated by this agent.

Sixteen cases of an unusual type of hyperthyroidism occurring in men are reported and analyzed. These patients were all in excellent health before the onset of toxic symptoms, and in only two cases was the iodine used because of a supposed need of the patient himself, the other patients being "innocent victims" of the general use of the salt in the family cooking. The high incidence of this disease in men during the last six months, as compared with the very low incidence which Hartsook's previous experience had led him to expect, has been very striking, the most plausible explanation being that men as a rule use a great deal of salt.—*Medical Times*.